

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1129

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ATHENS 8463

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTRA, GR, SA

SUBJECT: BUSINESS VISAS FOR SAUDI ARABIA

1. AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION FOR MANY US REGIONAL OFFICES TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY RELOCATING TO ATHENS FROM BEIRUT IS COMMUNICATIONS AND EASY ACCESS TO SAUDI ARABIA. FIRMS SUCH AS INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER AND WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC, FOR EXAMPLE, REPORT THAT LARGE NUMBER OF TECHNICAL PERSONNEL ARE REQUIRED TO TRAVEL REGULARLY TO SAUDI ARABIA. FIRMS ARE HOWEVER ENCOUNTERING DIFFICULTIES WITH LOCAL SAUDI EMBASSY WHICH LACKS INSTRUCTIONS AND IS INSISTING ON CONFIRMATION FROM SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTRY OF ALL "OFFICIAL" BUSINESS VISITOR INVITATIONS, WHICH RESULTS IN FREQUENT DELAYS AND MISSED BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS.

2. COMMERCIAL OFFICER MET WITH SAUDI CHARGE ORKOBY NOVEMBER 3 WHO RECOMMENDED THAT US EMBASSY DISCUSS PROBLEM WITH SAUDI MINISTRY IN EFFORT TO OBTAIN MORE FLEXIBILITY FOR LOCAL EMBASSY IN PROCESSING BUSINESS VISA APPLICATIONS FROM REGIONAL US FIRMS IN ATHENS. ORKOBY STATED THAT HE HAS RECEIVED NO INSTRUCTIONS FROM EITHER MINISTRY OR BEIRUT EMBASSY REGARDING SUCH TRAVEL

3. FYI: SEVERAL US FIRMS REPORT THAT SAUDI EMBASSY IN BEIRUT FREQUENTLY ISSUED BUSINESS VISAS ON BASIS OF INTRODUCTORY LETTERS FROM AMEMBASSY. IF SIMILAR SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO MINISTRY, EMBASSY
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WOULD BE PLEASED TO ASSIST IN THIS RESPECT. AT PRESENT, VOLUME

OF FORMER BEIRUT BUSINESS PERSONNEL REQUIRING EXPEDITIOUS VISAS
TO SAUDI ARABIA IS LEADING TO NUMEROUS CALLS AND REQUESTS FOR
ASSISTANCE BY AMEMBASSY. LOCAL SAUDI PERSONNEL APPEAR MOST
WILLING TO COOPERATE, BUT LACK INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS MATTER.
WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS ON POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THIS
BOTTLENECK.
KUBISCH

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